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UNCLAS MAPUTO 001639

SIPDIS

FOR AF/FO AND AF/S

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SUBJECT: MOZAMBIKAN GENERAL ELECTIONS: GUEBUZA ELECTED
PRESIDENT, FRELIMO RETAINS PARLIAMENT

REF: MAPUTO 1616 AND PREVIOUS

1. On December 21 Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) announced the results of the December 1-2 general elections: FRELIMO Secretary General Armando Guebuza has won the race for president, capturing 63.74 percent of the valid national vote and FRELIMO has returned to Parliament with a strong majority, winning 160 seats, up from its current 133. RENAMO leader and Guebuza's opponent in the presidential contest, Afonso Dhlakama, won only 31.74 percent of the votes - a significantly worse showing than in 1999 when he received 48 percent of the vote, losing to current President Chissano. The three other candidates in the presidential race hardly mattered at all. Raul Domingos (a former senior RENAMO official) won 2.63 percent; Yaqub Sibindy received 0.91 percent and Carlos Reis claimed 0.87 percent. In Parliament, the 90 seats not won by FRELIMO were taken by RENAMO. None of the 21 other parties on the ballot received the threshold level of five percent of the national vote needed to qualify for a seat. FRELIMO's total was 7 seats short of the 167 needed to be able to amend the constitution.

2. Voter turnout was surprisingly light, roughly 45 percent, well down from 74 percent in the 1999 elections. It appears that many RENAMO and some FRELIMO voters stayed home.

3. Technically, the results are not official until the Constitutional Council validates them, although this is little more than a formality. Under the Mozambican constitution this body, made up largely of prominent FRELIMO or FRELIMO-leaning citizens, must "analyze" the election votes, taking into account appeals and complaints. Despite reported irregularities (see previous reporting), we anticipate a quick endorsement of the CNE-announced results, probably in early January. No date has been set for an inauguration, but we have heard January 14, 15 and 18 as possibilities.

4. We will provide more analysis of the 2004 elections septel.
DUDLEY